

**EVENING MEETING
BOARD WORK SESSION
JANUARY 25, 2001
MINUTES**

The State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) met for dinner at 6:00 p.m. in The Edison Walthall Hotel, 225 East Capitol Street, Jackson, Mississippi, on January 25, 2001. Following dinner, board members, staff and guest moved to the Camille Room on the 8th floor in the Hotel.

Mr. George Walker, SBCJC Chair, officially called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. The following members were present: Yvonne Brown, Brenda Collins, Sara Fox, Joanna Heidel, Henry "Bubba" Hudspeth, John Junkin, Veldore Heidelberg, George Walker and Lawrence Warren. Mr. Jimmy Murphy was absent. State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) staff present included: Randall Bradberry, Becky Cade, Larry Day, Deborah Gilbert, Olon E. Ray, Wayne Stonecypher and Evelyn Webb. Mr. Allen Cooper, Budget Analyst for the Department of Finance and Administration was present as well.

Mr. Walker called on Dr. Ray to discuss the first agenda item, Legislative Budget Office (LBO) for FY 2002 Recommendations and Impact on the Agency. Dr. Ray began by asking Ms. Deborah Gilbert to distribute and briefly review a handout that provided a financial picture of the SBCJC should the legislative budget recommendations be realized. (Refer to Attachment A.) Dr. Ray followed by emphasizing the fact that the recommended budget cuts would severely affect the SBCJC's ability to operate. The cuts would eliminate 16 out of 42 authorized positions or 12 out of 16 authorized and currently filled positions and workforce training would be cut by 57% should the \$8 million reduction to that program take place. Dr. Ray pointed out that the SBCJC office is not structured in a manner that there are specialized areas that function separately, as in the case of workforce. Instead SBCJC personnel work across lines to eliminate duplication and to allow for as few staff as possible. Dr. Ray reviewed the major job tasks that several employees perform to illustrate how staff crosses program areas. He explained that the SBCJC was already understaffed, thus the elimination of the proposed positions would cripple the office.

Dr. Ray also expressed his concern that the cuts to workforce training would reduce the state's ability to provide service to the new suppliers expected to come into the state as a result of Nissan locating in the state and to lower the colleges' ability to provide retraining services for those employers that lose experienced employees to Nissan. Mr. Walker pointed out that the State Workforce Development Council (SWDC) had formed a couple of sub-committees to develop strategies to publicize the crisis these cuts would bring to workforce training. The Council had agreed on two major actions to ensure that private sector and legislative leaders were aware of the potential effect on the state's economic development these cuts would have. First, they asked Workforce Center Directors to call a special meeting of their District Workforce Councils to explain the cuts. Secondly, SWDC members and local business/industry representatives will voice their concerns over the cuts by participating in interviews with editorial personnel at numerous newspapers and television stations around the state. Further discussion ensued especially as it relates to the unfairness of the cuts because of the elimination of House Bill 400. Mr. Lawrence Warren made a request for staff to take the House Bill 400 monies and calculate the percentage of funds that would be deducted across the board to other agencies.

In addition to the workforce education cuts Dr. Ray expressed his concern over the cuts to the community and junior college support budget as well. Cuts to the colleges' budget will hurt economic development within the state. He stated that the colleges are committed to making severe cuts. Additionally, most if not all, are pursuing tuition increases for next year. However, it should be understood that even with these strategies, more drastic measures may be taken since 75% of their budgets fund salaries.

For the current Fiscal Year 2001, Dr. Ray explained that there is good reason to believe that the SBCJC will be asked to reduce year's general fund appropriations by 5%. Ms. Gilbert distributed a spreadsheet with recommended cuts by categories to considered in the event a reduction was announced. (Refer to Attachment B.)

Next on the agenda was the work of the committee as a whole. Mr. Walker called on Ms. Sara Fox, Finance Board Liaison to review the finance agenda items as follows:

- 1) General Fund 2298 Disbursement for February 2001 totaling \$8,364,598
- 2) January 30, 2001, Education Enhancement Fund Disbursement for Funds 4080 and 4110 for a total of \$2,276,847;
- 3) A report on Quarterly Capital Improvements;
- 4) Purchasing Approval of \$33,229 for the purpose of purchasing computer equipment. Approval of a request to spend a total of \$99,750 for an annual maintenance for the equipment utilize by the statewide community college interactive video network; and
- 5) Financial Statements for Funds 2291, 3291 and 4300.

There being no other business under finance, Mr. Walker called on Ms. Joanna Heidel, Board Liaison for Programs, to discuss the program agenda items as follows:

- 1) A request from Hinds Community College to add two new options under Drafting and Design Technology. These options would not require additional funding for salaries and equipment and would enhance the offerings under an approved, established program. (Refer to Attachment C.)
- 2) A request from Meridian Community College to expand their curriculum and change their one-year Respiratory Care program to a two-year program in order to comply with the accreditation agency for these type programs. (Refer to Attachment D.)

Mr. Walker called on Dr. Ray for General Comments. Dr. Ray basically stated that he thought he had covered everything that he had to offer tonight under the first agenda item, but offered to address any other issues or questions that members might have.

Under other business, Dr. Stonecypher distributed a handout reflecting legislative bills and resolutions that have been drafted that either directly or indirectly affects the community/junior college system. He pointed out that the positions taken by the presidents were included on the list of bills. He stated that he was sharing them with the members for their review over night and that the bills would be discussed in some detail during the January 26, 2001, meeting. (Refer to Attachment E.)

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Mr. Warren expressed his concern that too much was being made of the budget issue. Basically he expressed his impression that these cuts are an opportunity to tighten the purse strings and to get better at what we do. Mr. Hudspeth expressed his hope that the reality of this situation could be used to make improvements.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.